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Phoenix, AZ 85007-2996

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Subject: Southwest Gas Corporation's Communication Improvement Report  
G-01551A-10-0458, D.72723

In compliance with Decision No. 72723, Southwest Gas Corporation hereby files an original and thirteen copies of its Customer Communication Improvement Report.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (702) 876-7163.

Respectfully,

*Debra S. Gallo by amy*

Debra S. Gallo, Director  
Government & State Regulatory Affairs

DSG:kt  
Enclosure



**SOUTHWEST GAS CORPORATION**

**Southwest Gas Corporation's  
Customer Communication Improvement  
Report**

March 31, 2012

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In compliance with Decision No. 72723 (Docket No. G-01551A-10-0458), Southwest Gas Corporation ("Southwest Gas" or "Company") submits this report to highlight the Company's efforts to improve customer communication by implementing tools and tactics that will allow Southwest Gas to communicate more effectively and immediately with its customers.

Southwest Gas has been, and continues to be, steadfast in communications with its customers. Communication methods used by the Company to inform customers, especially during a natural gas outage situation include: collaborating with local media by conducting interviews with both print and television outlets, posting information on Southwest Gas' website, partnering with local governments and various community organizations, and contacting customers using a "reverse 911" phone system. "Reverse 911" is a public safety communication system that allows governmental agencies to identify geographic areas to receive short messages on landline phones within the defined geographic area. Southwest Gas continues to communicate to customers through bill inserts and bill messages as required.

During the past 12 months, Southwest Gas has worked diligently to improve its communication efforts by adding a new realm of communication strategies to reach its customers. In order to provide real-time information, Southwest Gas has engaged social media by creating both Facebook and Twitter accounts, updated its website to provide interactive maps, and developed a predictive dialing system similar to the "reverse 911" concept.

## **Communication Improvements**

Southwest Gas has implemented various communication methods to effectively deliver real-time information to its customers. Highlighted below are the newly adopted communication tactics that the Company has incorporated.

### **Social Media**

The Company has embraced social media by creating accounts on both Facebook ([www.facebook.com/southwestgas](http://www.facebook.com/southwestgas)) and Twitter ([www.twitter.com/swgas](http://www.twitter.com/swgas)). Both of these social media platforms allow Southwest Gas to immediately communicate with its customers by providing directed information about the Company and its service, the natural gas industry, energy efficiency, energy savings tips, plus other interest-related topics. Depending on the situation, Southwest Gas also provides links to other websites that would be helpful to customers. For example, if there were wildfires in one of the communities Southwest Gas serves, links to government sites about the fire and community organizations that are providing shelter to those who are displaced would be provided.

### **Website Enhancements**

On Southwest Gas' website, a dynamic News Bulletin can easily be activated on its homepage to provide up-to-the-minute information including, but not limited to, natural gas outages, natural disasters, and other incidents that potentially impact natural gas service. The News Bulletin may also contain links to other websites that provide helpful information to customers during a specific situation.

To further assist customers during a natural gas outage, an interactive outage map has also been added to Southwest Gas' website. This map identifies affected outage areas and includes subsequent restoration areas.

In the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2011, Southwest Gas implemented an infrastructure enhancement to support publicly accessible information systems, such as the website, providing maximum uptime by using two redundant, geographically separated, active data center sites.

### **Outage Notification Calls**

Due to the limitations associated with the "reverse 911" concept, Southwest Gas implemented an Outage Notification system utilizing outbound phone calls by contracting with a third-party vendor, Televox. Utilizing a web-based user interface and pre-recorded messages, calls can be launched within minutes of an outage to notify affected customers. In November 2011, this system was successfully used in Southwest Gas' Southern Nevada service territory during an

outage situation to inform customers of a limited outage resulting from third-party damage. Southwest Gas received favorable feedback from both customers and Nevada regulators on the usefulness of the system.

Each communication method that Southwest Gas adopts is incorporated into its internal Communications Plan. The Plan is tested annually with the participation of various departments.

In addition to Southwest Gas' website, [www.swgas.com](http://www.swgas.com), the Company created a micro site, Southwest Gas Living, [www.swgasliving.com](http://www.swgasliving.com). This website promotes energy assistance programs, energy efficiency programs, safety information, and also hosts a customer newsletter.

### **Communication Methods in Progress**

A communication method that Southwest Gas continues to explore is contacting customers via text messages or email. Currently, the Company is implementing the capability to compile customer contact profiles in order to identify mobile contact numbers, and other contact information. Customers' preferred manner of receiving electronic communications will also need to be identified. Included in this effort will be the options of receiving a text message, an email, or a phone call on either a cell phone or landline, so that the Company's communications methods will be consistent with customer preferences.

In order for this method to be effective, customers' will have to be willing to provide the Company with their email addresses and phone numbers, as well as indicate that they would like to be communicated to via these avenues. Some customers may decline to receive Southwest Gas information electronically; some may only want to receive emergency and natural gas outage information; while others may want to receive all Company notifications including safety, rebates and energy efficiency information. Customer text messaging is technically and economically feasible, and Southwest Gas is currently doing preparatory work to facilitate this communication avenue.

### **Conclusion**

Southwest Gas is committed to effectively communicating with its customers. In its effort to better communicate with its customers, Southwest Gas will continue to identify and research communication tools and tactics. The Company will continue to update the Commission on the progress of its communication methods in upcoming filings.